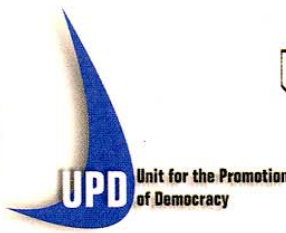


Local Governance in Small States Issues - Experiences - Options



Subregional
Office for
Barbados and
the OECS

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**Final Report of the OAS/UNDP Conference held in
St. Vincent and the Grenadines, April 14-15, 2003**

Sponsored by OAS/Unit for the Promotion of Democracy in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme and with the support of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained in all the quotations herein because many were obtained from third parties and sources other than the declarant to whom they are attributed.



I. Executive Summary

Background

The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (UPD/OAS) and the United Nations Development Programme serving Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean have been responding to requests from Caribbean states for support in the process of examining and undertaking democratic promotion and consolidation.

A regional conference on Constitutional Reform in the Caribbean coordinated by UPD/OAS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the University of the West Indies was held in January 2002 in Barbados. Conference recommendations noted that local government; decentralization; citizen input; and community action were key facets of governance in the Caribbean region. Concerns centered on the scope, content, objectives and institutional arrangements for decentralization and local governance, especially in the context of the limited resources and specific needs of the region's smallest states.

There are clear challenges to governance, development, and democracy in small states. OAS member states and the UNDP have recognized that the security of such states is related, *inter alia*, to their capacity to deal adequately with threats to governance posed by a rapidly changing, often hostile, international environment and complex endogenous and external socio-economic pressures.

Complementary initiatives by the High-level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation; the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) adopted by the UN Global Conference convened in Barbados in 1994; the "Forward Together" Consultation held by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 2002, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting of 2002 similarly pointed to the timeliness of addressing local governance and decentralization issues in the region in a concerted manner.

The OAS/UNDP Forum

As a follow up to the Barbados conference, the UPD/OAS in coordination with the UNDP and with the support of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, organized a forum on "Local Governance in Small States: Issues, Experiences, Options." The event, focusing on the Eastern Caribbean, was organized as part of the UPD Democratic Forum series and as an activity of the UPD's Decentralization Program. It took place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines from April 14-15, 2003.

The forum was designed to explore the issues of decentralization,

local government and civil society participation and their constitutional ramifications. Possible models for developing and strengthening local governance in the region and key parameters for action were discussed.

The forum, facilitated discussion in a round table setting, and established a platform for future dialogue, information exchange and technical assistance. Among some 60 participants from 15 countries were representatives of various sectors of Caribbean society including national leaders, members of parliament, civic organizers, representatives of labor, youth, and women's groups, legal experts, religious leaders, scholars, and political activists; there were also many representatives of regional and international organizations.

The forum aimed to deepen already initiated dialogue supported by the UPD/OAS and UNDP as well as focus on specific concerns and recommendations for action from the Barbados Conference on Constitutional Reform. The meeting sought to advance further definition of appropriate policy frameworks to reinforce the democratic foundations of small states in the Caribbean region.



"Various sectors from 15 Caribbean countries participated in the roundtable discussion on local governance in small states." (From left to right: Joseph Peltier, Arthur Bobb, Cecil Ryan and Enis Nathaniel)

The forum proceedings began with a keynote address by the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Dr. Honorable Ralph E. Gonsalves, in which he outlined his support for the re-introduction of local government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, an issue currently being considered by a Constitutional Review Commission in that country. He presented his own concrete recommendations for a system of local government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which served as a springboard for the wide-ranging debate on local governance that ensued. There followed panel discussions focused on five main areas, for which the organizers had drafted terms of reference and potential questions to be addressed:

- The Legal and Institutional Framework of Local Government in the Caribbean: Key Parameters
- Decentralized Structures As Tools of Development and Integration: Policy Implications
- Decentralization and Local Governance: Strategies for Action
- Views on Local Governance and Civil Society/Community Participation: Some Best Practices
- Experiences in Local Governance and Local Government Reform

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The final discussion and working group session resulted in conclusions and action points from the previous five.

While the scope of the topic and limited time available did not permit exhaustive treatment of topics or the formulation of a set of recommendations supported by all participants, nonetheless, the forum highlighted the demand and the resources for ongoing inter-sectoral debate on local governance in the region in particular, the Eastern Caribbean. The issues raised during the deliberations should generate sustained dialogue and action. A number of generally shared viewpoints emerged from the forum:

A.- Effective local government, rooted in strong local governance, is valuable regardless of the size of the state or constituency involved. Its central benefits include:

1. widened civic participation in decision-making and enhanced democratic process;
2. more responsive and efficient local service provision;
3. strengthened communication and partnership between central and local governance programs and objectives.

Hence the creation or re-institution of effective local government is highly desirable to reinforce democratic governance in small Caribbean states.

B.- Local government in the Eastern Caribbean region is currently absent or undermined by overly centralized systems that have tended to limit its actual capacity, functions, and powers. Institution building for local government will entail building its structural capacity, resilience, degree of autonomy, and access to appropriate resources. It will equally entail gaining and justifying the confidence of all citizens that it has well-defined functions and powers that it can fulfill. The recommendations below follow from this analysis.

C.- The role, functions, and powers of local government should be clearly stated and entrenched in constitutional and legal frameworks. The constitutional reform process currently being undertaken in some 11 CARICOM nations offers an excellent opportunity and entry point for support of these initiatives. These frameworks, make local government less vulnerable to changes in government and "interference" from the central government, and offer firm and consistent mandates (e.g. for accessing resources and electing/appointing representatives). They also promote accountability to the public, by clearly defining rights and responsibilities.

D.- Top-down institutionalization of local government is likely to be ineffective and should be avoided. Equal bottom-up participation and validation from local communities will enhance the definition and operational parameters of local governance mechanisms to best serve communities. Both central government and existing local government therefore need to increase their responsiveness to civil society and to work with civil society as partners in governance. It was generally agreed that it is important to give voice to local communities as a means of measuring the genuine interests of people thus bypassing difficulties associated with local party politics. Local government must make deliberate efforts to reflect the needs and seek the participation of all constituents at all levels. Particular effort must be made to include traditionally marginalized groups, including women; youth; those with disabilities; the economically disadvantaged, as decision-makers as well as recipients of services.

E.- Bringing people into the process of local governance and local government requires investment in better communication, public information and education which would address what it is, what it can do, and how they can get involved. Among proposed improvements are:

1. enhanced civic education for children at primary and secondary level;
2. better and more widespread information for adults. E.g. regular public consultations by government with local communities; tailored workshops for women in negotiating and policymaking skills;
3. the creation of Decentralization and Local Governance Studies at the University of the West Indies (UWI), possibly through its Continuing Education Programs;
4. the creation of National and Caribbean Youth Parliaments, to give young people experience and opportunity of handling governance issues;
5. involvement of national and regional media to promote local governance awareness and debate;
6. greater use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to connect local communities with governance mechanisms and resources and opportunities for enhanced dialogue and participation.



Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves with Vincentian youth. Participants advocated enhanced civic education for children at primary and secondary levels.

- F.- Establishing or revitalizing local governance will mean (re)defining and modernizing its role. Traditional models and access to services were characterized by monopoly, hierarchic central control, direct management of services, and standardized service. The contemporary model is more likely to be competitive, with more devolved management and flexible, customer-tailored services. The central task of local government and governance in the region will be sustainable human development, balancing creative entrepreneurship with good environmental management. To change perceptions of local government, appropriate investment and appropriate incentives are crucial: adequate pay for local government officials, reduced bureaucracy in decision-making. It was generally agreed that local governments and communities should have more rights but also obligations. The principle of accountability applies at all levels. Thus greater autonomy must be balanced by greater financial and administrative transparency and enhanced measures for accountability. A new, energetic rhetoric of local government should encode its value as the first sphere of governance rather than the lowest tier of government.
- G.- Regional organizations and the international community can play a valuable role in sharing best practices and offering information, experience, and support to small states in local government and local governance. There are many relevant models of local governance structures and processes inside and outside the Caribbean region. Among the specific tools that may prove useful are:
1. Citizens' charters to enhance transparency and accountability of local government.
 2. Simple, standardized diagnostic markers to measure standards of provision and need across different local constituencies.
 3. Prioritization models to assist local communities in strategizing centralization of development aims and bids for funding.

A Proposal for Local Government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph E. Gonsalves, opened the forum by stating his commitment to re-introducing local government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Parliament in 2002 mandated a Commission on Local Government to "make appropriate recommendations for the establishment of democratic local government on a timely basis." This is behind schedule, but examination of the issue is ongoing in the context of a "root-and-branch" review of the Constitution toward implementing reform.

Dr. Gonsalves made certain recommendations specific to re-introducing local government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which raised issues generally pertinent to implementing local government in small states. Among the views he expressed:

1. It is vital to devolve and decentralize the current centrally administered system, which has been neither participatory nor efficient, but to avoid creating a “too highly tiered” system of local government, which would add expense without contributing to more effective service delivery.
2. NGOs and civil society should have an institutionalized role in local government structures to enhance popular participation in governance.
3. Competitive local elections and local authorities in the hands of a political party other than that in central government are potentially divisive. The preferred formula for determining representation on local government councils in St. Vincent and the Grenadines might therefore be: 7 persons nominated by the majority party in Parliament; 2 by the minority party; 4 by NGOs and CBOs. This would “capture a satisfactory element of representative democracy without deepening partisan political divisiveness.”
4. Local authorities may not be empowered to raise taxes, but may be funded entirely through agreed disbursements from the Consolidated Fund by Central Government. They should also be encouraged to seek public/private partnerships and local sponsorship for individual projects such as investment in local schools.



From left to right: Philip La Corbiniere (OECS); Anne-Marie Blackman (UPD/OAS); Selmon Waters (Minister of Social Development of St. Vincent & the Grenadines); Ralph E. Gonsalves (Prime Minister of St. Vincent & the Grenadines); Carlos Gadsden (RIAD); and Rosina Wiltshire (UNDP).

Participants welcomed Dr. Gonsalves's commitment to the process of renewing local government in the region. The concrete suggestions he laid out provided a springboard for launching discussion in the panels that followed.

CHAPTER I:

THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN: KEY PARAMETERS

A. Overcoming Historical Legacies

In the English-speaking Caribbean, notwithstanding long-standing democratic tradition, state systems have tended towards centralization. Efforts toward decentralization have been fraught with difficulties, hampered by historical encumbrances and the limited resource base of small states. Many states either have no local government, or local authorities that, in the words of Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, are “but an administrative mechanism for effecting central government direction and authority.” Where established, decentralization and local government in practice often suffer from highly centralized management and control, and are generally characterized by extreme fragility. Institutional arrangements can easily be dismantled by a ruling party or become notional forms that are not translated into practice.

Participants agreed that successful institution-building for local government in the Caribbean would entail acknowledging and overcoming a degree of distrust and disillusion attached to this historical legacy, both on the part of politicians and their constituents.

Philip Osei, of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies at the University of the West Indies, described the “pendulum effect” whereby central governments in the region had alternated between giving some kind of autonomy to local authorities and withdrawing their commitment, redirecting all effective power to the center. He said that the challenge is to build the institutional strength and resilience of local government to changes in the political climate, to create a framework for local government to work consistently and effectively with institutional partners, and to reduce opportunities for “political tribalism,” which can interfere with local government successfully executing its mandate.



Constitutional reform expert, Carlyle Corbin.

Selmon Waters, Minister of Social Development, Cooperatives, the Family, Gender and Ecclesiastical Affairs of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, commented that in the past “mere lip service” had been paid to local government. Changing perceptions and realities of local government will crucially entail building its capacity, degree of autonomy, and access to appropriate resources. It will equally entail gaining and justifying the confidence of all citizens that it has

well-defined functions and powers that it can fulfill. This will mean institutionalizing higher standards of transparency and accountability.

B. The Desirability of Local Government in Small States: Does Size Matter?

There was strong support from conference participants for the (re)institution of effective local government, rooted in strong local governance, in the Caribbean, regardless of the size of state or constituency involved.

Bishnu Ragoonath, of the University of the West Indies, quoted the prominent academic L.J. Sharpe's definition of local government as ideally "a coordinator of services in the field, a reconciler of community opinion, a consumer pressure group, an agent for responding to rising demands, and a counterweight to incipient cynicism." Along with other participants, he emphasized that a state's small size did not disqualify it from experiencing the potential benefits of local government. These included enhanced service provision tailored to local needs, enhanced civic participation in decision-making and problem-solving, and better communication and cooperation between local, regional, and central spheres of governance.

"Local government is really about development," said Ragoonath, "every task undertaken by local government should be directed at improving the quality of life of the citizen, be it economically, socially, politically, culturally, or even psychologically." He cited positive experience of local government, for instance in the United States amongst groups as small as 5,000 people and the desirability of studying and sharing best practices beyond the Caribbean region.



"Local Government is really about development." Bishnu Ragoonath of UWI (center) with Edwin Jones, UWI (left) and Larel Thomas, Mayor of Kingston, Jamaica (right).

Participants emphasized the modern challenges posed to small states in the region by the economic pressures of globalization, the formation of regional entities such as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), and a growing "cultural of individualism." The value of good local government was, however, enhanced rather than diminished by these challenges. Many stressed the important role that could be played by local government in supporting sustainable local economic development in small states, for example through ecotourism.

However, as Philip Osei stressed, "not all local authorities are created equal. Local, parish, village, town and regional councils have different human and

financial resources. Differences need to be acknowledged to give appropriate tasks to appropriate bodies.”

Others agreed that a close fit between size and function was vital and that a “one size fits all” model of local government was inappropriate and impracticable. Ragoonath suggested that there was a risk attached to “over decentralizing,” citing the experience of Dominica, which has 41 local government councils for a population of 70,000. He argued for the need to identify “natural communities” when determining the size and boundaries for areas under local government authority, and the desirability of using local government to reduce bureaucracy, by dealing with local issues locally, rather than “adding extra layers” of paperwork.



"Not all local authorities are created equal." Philip Osei, UWI.

C. Constitutional Reform and Legislative Consolidation

There was general agreement that defining and enshrining the role, functions, and powers of local government in legislation was an important step toward its institutional consolidation. The constitutional reform process currently being undertaken in some 11 CARICOM nations offers an excellent opportunity to achieve this. Osei noted: “to be durable, local government has to be rooted - so it can't be swept away by a new regime.”

Ragoonath agreed that only powers enshrined in legislation can “give local government teeth,” but warned that legislation alone was insufficient guarantee for the security of local government. He cited the cases of Barbados, where local government was dismantled some years ago, and Grenada, where constitutional guarantees for local government have not held firm in practice. Constitutional and legislative consolidation must thus be based on realistic formulae for local government that will be simultaneously validated and enacted from the “top down” and the “bottom up.”

Osei noted that in Ghana, a Regional Development Fund was enshrined in law to provide resources for local authorities. Fiscal decentralization and revenue sharing between central and local government might thus be established via constitutional settlement, effecting a better defined and more stable income stream for local authorities. Various participants pointed to the desirability of enshrining good practices as well as functions and powers in legislation. For example, in Belize the convention that local government representatives must meet with the community every 3 months is written into legislation.

Ragoonath argued that “beyond the Constitution, the legislative framework within which local government is couched can facilitate strong or weak local government.” A consistent, single piece of legislation to regulate local governments across a single island was more easily enforced and less easily eroded than multiple pieces of legislation, each governing a single authority.

Another advantage of clear legislative consolidation is that citizens can “see and verify” the “blueprints” for democratic institutions. Professor Edwin Jones, also of the University of the West Indies, recommended the creation of manuals, procedural guidelines and Citizens Charters' outlining “what local government can and will do and what the rights and responsibilities of citizens are in holding local government accountable.”

D. Institutionalizing Partnership

Several participants spoke of the need to define and institutionalize relationships between local government and its partners in governance, both in central government and in civil society. Three-way consultation among central government, local government, and the community at large should be written into local government legislation and procedural guidelines. Osei noted that Ministers of Finance were often not involved in discussion between central and local government and stressed that the Treasury needed to be “brought on board” more often and more explicitly.

The institutional model for local government should not be monolithic, with local authorities maintaining unipolar institutional relations. Rather, centralization of programs, and co-production should form elements of a “rich tapestry” of institutional partnerships.

The possibility was raised of creating a resource center for Decentralization and Local Governance Studies to provide institutional academic partnership, expertise and support for initiatives to create/ reinvigorate local government in the Caribbean region.

E. Systems of Representation in Local Government

There was productive debate about the appropriate institutional framework for choosing local government representatives.

Several participants felt that local constituencies should democratically elect local government representatives. At present only two countries in the Eastern Caribbean (the Commonwealth of Dominica and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago) have elected local governments.

Some argued that the framework for such elections should moreover be non-partisan, as the party political nature of local government elections tended to foster divisiveness and interference from party representatives at a national level. Others felt that the possibility of non-partisan candidature for local office was

unrealistic, and would further exacerbate low participation in local elections. Arguments were also put forward for a continuation, or minor modification, of the system current in some states whereby a proportion of local councilors are appointed by central government, while others are locally elected. The relative proportions of appointed and elected representatives might, some proposed, be altered to create a “fairer balance” in the composition of local authorities.

There was no consensus about the optimal framework for choosing local government representatives, and many held that local and regional parameters would determine the system preferred in each case. Participants agreed, however, that transparency and consistency in operating the chosen system were paramount. Ron Green, Member of Parliament in the Commonwealth of Dominica, reported that in Dominica it has been the practice for councilors ostensibly nominated by central government from candidates selected locally, to be, in fact, political appointees imposed without local consultation.



Ron Green, Member of Parliament from Dominica, emphasizes importance of elected local officials.

Ragoonath pointed to the establishment of time frames and management of election procedures as another area for consideration and legislative consolidation. Local elections might, he suggested, be conducted every third or fourth year; the dates staggered by region; and timed not to coincide with general elections in order to reduce the potential negative effects of “political tribalism” on law and order.

CHAPTER II:

DECENTRALIZED STRUCTURES AS TOOLS OF DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Decentralization, strengthening of local government and citizen participation are increasingly seen as key policy instruments for state modernization throughout the hemisphere. As the small states of the Eastern Caribbean face an increasingly complex, globalized, competitive international environment characterized by the loss of traditional markets and economic preferences, technological, environmental and security challenges, the role of decentralized structures as channels for development efforts has become increasingly crucial.

Phillip La Corbiniere, of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), noted that Caribbean states were “under pressure” not least “to conform to international standards and norms whose very interpretation may fall out of their control.” He stressed “adaptability” and “sustainability” as watchwords for development in the region. Panelists agreed that local governance forms and functions must adapt to the role they were increasingly bound to play in national and sub-national efforts to promote sustainable development.

A. Promoting Economic Opportunity and Social Equity

Neville Duncan, of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of UWI, underlined the importance of local governance and community-based partnership to creating economic opportunities and promoting greater social equity. He stressed that unemployment in the Eastern Caribbean states currently stood at between 8 percent and 20 percent and that this was the central economic reality for most in the region. “We need to establish a new economic and development policy for crisis regions, a third economic sector,” he contended.



“NGOs should not supersede local government.” Neville Duncan, UWI.

Current models for revitalizing local governance were insufficiently radical, in his view, to meet the nature of the crises besetting the region. Among the most positive recent developments in the Anglophone Caribbean had been public sector reform and central governments’ increasing engagement with civil society; however, “NGOs should not supersede local government, which is uniquely well placed to bring civil society and national government together in urgently productive relationships.” Carl Wright, of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (based in the United Kingdom), agreed that the democratic and community-based legitimacy and permanence of local government structures made them obvious “enablers for pro-poor strategies.”

Wright emphasized the positive role of local government in the Commonwealth as a foundation for democracy embodying choice, local empowerment, and inclusiveness. Cecilia Babb of the Caribbean Policy Development Center based in Barbados voiced the need for decentralized structures to make greater effort to include women in decision-making roles. Too many are currently represented only in an administrative capacity. Tailored training and workshops are necessary to improve the access of traditionally marginalized groups (such as women, youth, the disabled, the socially disadvantaged) to participation in local governance structures.

B. Promoting Sustainable Development

Local government is also uniquely well placed as an enabler of sustainable development, disaster management, and water management. Participants agreed that new designs for decentralized structures should take into account the priority of sustainable development as the central concern of modern governance at local level. Wright commented “we should think of service delivery not just in the old sense of cleaning streets but in the sense of providing an enabling environment for NGOs, the private sector, local and central government to cooperate on development issues.” Ron Green argued that the collection of fees from ecotourism sites might form one source of income for local development funds.

Further Policy Implications: Education, Creating Incentives, Regional Support

C. Education

Education is a lynchpin securing more democratic participation in local governance, continuously enhancing the knowledge, skills, and confidence citizens bring to governance issues. Mulchen Lewis, Coordinator of the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA), summed up a view held by the forum when he said that local governance should be a learning process for all.

Mr. Lewis voiced a general sentiment that better civic education, specifically covering “what local government does, how it operates, and how one can get involved” is required at primary and secondary school level. Muriel Byam, of the National Council of Women of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, agreed that there should also be further provision of tailored adult workshops for specific groups in specific skills, such as workshops targeted at women from the OECS to assist them to analyze and formulate policy - and hence to feel equipped to become decision-makers in local governance settings. Jarrette Narine, Minister of Local Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, added that improved levels of training should be offered to local government officials to enable them to handle increasingly sophisticated duties and issues associated with their role in development.

George De Peana, Secretary General of the Caribbean Congress of Labor (CCL), based in Trinidad and Tobago noted that his organization had run workshops for its members on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and highlighted the role of local government/governance bodies themselves in educating the population about regional integration mechanisms.

Participants considered that mass media campaigns - newspapers, television, and radio - should be encouraged to disseminate information and generate discussion about local governance. Community-based consultations and activities are equally vital to educate and energize local constituencies and to facilitate better two-way communication between central and local spheres of governance.

Participants also agreed that policymakers should make fuller use of the Internet and computer-based learning as a tool for communicating information and generating local governance debate. Paula Mohamed, of the UNDP Barbados Office, cited the Community Internet Centres Program proposed for implementation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, currently being implemented with funding support from UNDP, UN System agencies such as International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and other donors including the French, as one such positive initiative, which should be replicated. Anne-Marie Blackman of the UPD noted the importance of the appropriate application of new technologies as a tool of governance, particularly for promoting and facilitating central/local relations and promoting citizen and community participation and access to information and services.

Robert Fitzpatrick, of the Unity Labour Party in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Oswald Robinson, of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers' Union, observed that teachers often played a key role informally as local agents of change and that their contribution should be actively solicited and recognized. In Dominica, one recommendation for local government reform is that teachers and other public servants should be allowed to run for local government office - a proposal endorsed by several participants.



George De Peana of the Caribbean Congress of Labour emphasizes the role of local government bodies in educating the population about regional integration.

D. Creating Incentives

Many participants echoed Mr. Ron Green's analysis that the current challenge was to rebuild confidence and 'generate excitement' about local government and governance in the Caribbean region. This requires creating concrete incentives - such as reasonable pay for local government officials - but also a change in the rhetoric that encodes the valuation of local government. For example, in Dominica, success in collecting local taxes or 'house rates' for local government is low. Clearly, people have to perceive concrete gains from local 'house rate' to 'development fund' may help to focus new perceptions about this contribution. Mr. Carl Wright emphasized that local government needs to be perceived not as 'the lowest tier of multi-tier government' but 'the first sphere for multi-sphere governance'.

E. Regional Support: Sharing Best Practice

Mr. Carlos Gadsden, Vice President pro tempore of the OAS High Level Inter American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD) and Mr. Wright of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), both highlighted the support that regional organizations could offer states involved in the process of formulating and implementing decentralization structures and processes.

The High Level Inter American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD from its acronym in Spanish)

RIAD was created as a direct result of a meeting convened by the OAS in July 2001 to bring together Ministers and High Level Authorities Responsible for Decentralization, Local Government, and Citizen Participation. Among its objectives are: to follow up on commitments made at the Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Americas; to develop strategic lines of action; and to promote dialogue among the various sectors involved in the decentralization processes of the hemisphere, including central and local governments, parliamentarians, civil society, academic institutions, and international agencies.

Mr. Gadsden emphasized that RIAD's support, advice, and expertise were at the service of the Caribbean as well as of the rest of the Hemisphere. He noted it would be important to take the conclusions of the present forum to the second meeting of ministers and high level authorities of RIAD scheduled for Mexico City in September 2003.

Among the concrete policy tools analyzed by RIAD that may be of value in the Caribbean, is a transferable model for measuring the progress of local authorities in achieving a variety of concrete outputs. Mr. Gadsden described this diagnostic tool being developed by Mexico's National Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development, of which he is Director.



Carlos Gadsden of RIAD highlights support of regional organizations to local governance. (Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves to the left and Rosina Wiltshire of UNDP seated right.)

This diagnostic methodology permits evaluation and rating of the status of municipal services (waste disposal, for example) in the categories of red, amber, or green (where green represents the optimum social and environmental standard). Such simple and universal diagnostic tools can enable central government to assess local authorities' needs, municipality by municipality. They can help to create a goal-oriented approach with shared terms and expectations for central and local actors. Importantly, they also give citizens a universal measurement to which they can hold local authority service-providers accountable.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)



"Local government in the Commonwealth as a foundation for democracy embodying choice, local empowerment and inclusiveness." From left to right: Carl Wright, CLGF, Jonas Rabinovitch, UNDP, Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, UNDP.

Carl Wright, Director of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, gave further examples of regional information sharing and the support that regional organizations can offer policymakers. Mauritius, Fiji, and Malta - all members of the Commonwealth - present certain parallels with the situation of Eastern Caribbean states, and all enjoy effective local government. Malta, for example, has a population similar to that of Barbados and has constitutionally

enshrined local government. There are 68 local councils serving areas whose population ranges from 322 to 22,000. Disparities of size do not seem negatively to impact their effectiveness. Malta has also experienced success in active E-government, in local councils generating their own revenues, and in attracting a significant proportion (28 percent) of female councilors. Case studies of this kind constitute one of many forms of regional resource upon which designers of local government structures and processes can draw.

Participants agreed that through sharing experiences and “best practices” both inside and outside the region much can be learned.

CHAPTER III:**DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE: STRATEGIES FOR ACTION**

This panel addressed the major question: what specific strategies, mechanisms and instruments are necessary to empower local government or local governance structures to carry out their responsibilities?

A. Rethinking Traditional Models of Local Government as Service Provider

Bishnu Ragoonath argued that strategies for building or rebuilding local government in the Caribbean region must take into account service provision expected of local government in a contemporary setting. Where in the traditional model of provision, the local government supplier had been self-sufficient, now it would be working with other actors. Where the traditional model of service provision was characterized by monopoly, hierarchic central control, direct management of services, standardized service, and stable employment, the contemporary model would be characterized by competitive service provision, devolved management, customer-tailored service, and flexible employment. Flexibility and competitiveness were required in strategizing future local government service provision. Functions must be closely and carefully defined.

B. Devolving Decision-making

Truly decentralized local government is freed to act efficiently only when awarded a degree of autonomy. Some current bureaucratic restrictions therefore need to be removed: "At present," said Ragoonath, "you can't accept a gift of a garbage truck without going through central government." Local government should, further, be supported by appropriate human and financial resources - salaries for local councilors have hitherto frequently been grossly insufficient. George De Peana, agreed that a primary strategy for action was "empowerment" of local councils by giving them specific responsibilities and powers and encouraging quality applicants to participate actively. Personnel should receive a better degree of training to enable them to act efficiently and take responsibility in a more autonomous and demanding work setting.

However, confidence in local government can only be sustained by greater transparency and ease of tracking its finances. There should be a mechanism of recall for funds and direct accountability to local constituents. Osei suggested that new methods of auditing could play an important role in this process. Audit Commissions should be empowered to go beyond simply "checking the reliability of figures to scrutinize and support the efficiency and effectiveness of resource use."

C. Resourcing and Capacity Building for Local Government

All participants agreed that inadequate human and financial resourcing of local government had led to erosion of its capacity and effectiveness, and that ensuring adequate and appropriate resourcing for local government would be key to establishing or re-establishing its institutional powers and functionality. Neville Duncan stated that resource allocation to local government in the Caribbean region typically stood at no more than 5% of national budgets. 'We can't say we're making a revolution unless that proportion changes', he argued.

Participants discussed various possible models of resourcing for local government. Some felt that a regular income should be allocated to local councils from an earmarked central government fund. Others felt that direct tax raising powers were necessary to give local authorities a greater degree of financial autonomy.

Most felt that modern local government should also have an entrepreneurial economic role in generating income through business activities and that partnership with the private sector; bidding for seed-capital from development funds and regional organizations; attracting sponsorship and donations; promoting 'enterprise zones'; and fostering public/private partnerships would likely form part of the skill set required by local authorities in future.

Cecilia Babb, however raised the question whether there might be potential conflict between the increasing privatization of services provided by local authorities and the principal of local government funded by taxpayers to disburse public goods. Victor Cuffy, of the Human Rights Association of St Vincent and the Grenadines, agreed with Bishnu Ragoonath that scientific modeling should be developed to assist in analysis of how local authorities can become more financially self-sufficient, but re-emphasized that income and spending need to be monitored by better audit controls and accountability to local populations.



"Potential conflict between privatization of services and the principal of local government," Cecilia Babb of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre.

D. Thinking Beyond Decentralization

Jonas Rabinovich, of the Bureau of Development and Policy (BDP/UNDP), noted that UNDP has experienced a six-fold increase in resource allocation to the process of decentralization in recent years, reflecting a rapidly expanding worldwide demand. He welcomed the trend, but cautioned that

decentralization should not be pursued automatically as a solution in its own right to development problems. Decentralization was a process rather than a goal. If increasing the tax revenue base and increasing civic participation were the real goals, it was important to determine whether decentralization in a given situation would or would not serve these ends.

Rabinovitch argued for decentralization strategies that fully considered economic realities, that balanced long and short-term goals, local ownership and external support to keep populations motivated. Capacity building should be achieved incrementally as the level of response of local actors increased. Participant Oscar Allen agreed that “empowering the local is not inevitably equivalent to decentralizing.”



"The UNDP has experienced a six-fold increase in resource allocation to the process of decentralization in recent years." From left to right, Mulchen Lewis (CALGA), Jonas Rabinovitch (UNDP) and Philip LaCorbiniere (OECS).

CHAPTER IV:

VIEWS ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY/ COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: SOME BEST PRACTICES

Sustainable good governance requires the active participation of civil society. The Caribbean region enjoys a vibrant and informed civil society whose aims and scope have grown in recent years, making it a vital partner in the constitutional reform process.

A. The Strengths of Civil Society Participation

Civil society brings unique “energies and synergies” to local governance. As Arthur Bobb, Program Officer for the Windward Islands' Farmers' Association, put it, “quality service provision, especially to vulnerable groups, requires delivery that builds trust. Traditionally, local government service provision has often been distant and impersonal. Civil society often already has the networks of knowledge and trust required to deliver the required service to the appropriate group.”

Bobb also emphasized that “civil society brings added value in its transnational nature and scope.” Citing recent banana disputes, he noted that civil society had been effective in “bringing the WTO to the table” and in promoting fair-trade initiatives through advocacy at market level, networking capacity, and building the confidence of small farmers. As Larel Thomas, President of the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities, put it “wherever community-based organizations are strong, local government will be strong.”

Participants agreed that both central government and local government should make more deliberate efforts to be responsive to civil society, to work in partnership with civil society, and to enable members of civil society hitherto underrepresented in government to participate more fully at all levels of government - including themselves becoming ministers and councilors.

Bobb suggested that civil society organizations were still “often locally perceived as anti-government” and that addressing this cultural assumption of opposition was vital to improving effective communication and collaboration between local and central spheres.

B. Involving Youth in Local Governance

Nicolette Balcombe, President of the National Youth Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Representative of the Caribbean Federation of



“Civil Society brings unique ‘energies and synergies’ to local governance,” Arthur Bobb, Winward Islands' Farmers' Association.

Youth, reminded the discussants that the sustainability and future success of local governance structures depended on involving young people at every level: “we have to not only advocate but live the notion that nobody can change our community but us.” She contended that over 40 percent of the population in the Caribbean region is under 25, but youth is conspicuously underrepresented in local government in the Eastern Caribbean region.



"Ms. Nicolette Balcombe, President of National Youth Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines proposes a Caribbean Youth Parliament to foster interest and skills. Seated left, Oswald Robinson (SVG Teachers Union) and right, Muriel Byam (National Council of Women).

Balcombe also felt that many of the most pressing concerns of young people - employment generation, training, technology, and transparency in government - were not currently addressed by local government mechanisms. She emphasized that the “dire need for information about how government works, how decisions are made” should be met with better education and communication. But she stressed that genuine negotiation and dialogue must also form a part of local government's engagement with youth. Youth initiatives should be better funded and supported.

This regional youth representative proposed the establishment of a Caribbean Youth Parliament, to foster political interest and skills and international partnership among young people in the region, an aim supported by many participants. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, of UNDP's Caribbean Sub-Regional Resource Facility (SURF/UNDP), said that her organization would endeavor to assist in pursuing this goal, perhaps through the intermediary step of Caribbean youth participating in the French Youth Parliament.

C. Lessons from Dominica

Ron Green, MP from Dominica, voiced his conviction that local government is a key tool in Dominica and “must be resuscitated if local governance is to thrive”. Forty-one councils are currently elected for a three year term, but he considered only some 15 percent of these to be “very effective” and observed that for Council elections voter turnout has fallen to around 25 percent. In his view there is a pressing need to “rekindle the fire” of participatory passion through dynamic leadership and recognizing and promoting the best practice of the most effective councils.

A central problem Green identified was that there is currently insufficient two-way communication between central government and local councils, and insufficient consultation on local needs. He made the following recommendations for improving this situation:

1. Local government is mandated by law to have quarterly meetings with central government but this is not done. These meetings should be re-established in practice.
2. When central offices visit local districts they should integrate and network with local officials more effectively.
3. An example of good practice for a 'consultation and follow "through" exercise was local community planning in the village of La Plaine. The local council wrote to individuals to establish local needs. Residents attended a meeting having previously discussed their priorities in smaller group workshops. Plans were fine-tuned at another cooperative planning session. Local service delivery was then monitored and feedback relayed.

Other participants agreed that 'closing the loop' of communication by advance discussion, consultation in practice, then monitoring feedback on the success of initiatives, was vital to improving the partnership between local governance and central government.

D. Lessons from the Global Environmental Facility(GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP)

Joseph Peltier, coordinator of the SGP, reported on the support that this program could offer to community-based projects and action on biodiversity, climate change, and international waters. In addition to the grants themselves, the program can help to build capacity by familiarizing local people with the proposal formats, management structures and skills demanded for successful funding bids. He enumerated the Lessons learned by the program, which included:

1. The need for a national steering committee on the ground in each country, composed of able individuals with community-building skills.
2. That the local community in each case 'must influence the methodologies that we use and define the goals we set'. The process of consultation was never uniform and required extensive mapping and two-way reporting in each case.
3. That challenging existing power relations was an inevitable part of the process that should be anticipated and managed

CHAPTER V:

EXPERIENCES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

A. Lessons from St Lucia

Lucian Isidore, Director of Community Services and Local Government in St Lucia, reported that, in common with many small states in the region, St Lucia had experienced a historical shift between the 1940s, when local government was 'at the heart at the community' and was able to raise revenue through house and water rates, and the 1970s, when elements of the physical infrastructure - such as water and electricity - were centralized, a process that made economic sense but caused acute social damage to the communitarian spirit. Few changes were made to local government organization and ordinances to accommodate its changing role, and this lack of effective responsiveness, combined with political divisiveness and lack of accountability led to apathy in local government provision and reception. A four-year decentralization program was introduced in the 1980s with the aim of enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability - but this program failed to achieve its goals. Reasons identified for this included:

1. Poor coordination of efforts
2. Inadequate efforts to sensitize the public on program objectives
3. Inadequate resourcing

Currently there is a renewed impetus to revive local government in St Lucia. A consultancy study involving the Caribbean Development Bank was initiated, which concluded that before successful reintroduction of local government a groundwork must be laid involving (a) institutional reform (b) financial reform and (c) legislative reform. Central to this process must be bottom-up negotiation, participation, and validation from local communities in defining local government's parameters and how it can best serve them.

Reform efforts have tended towards 'gridlock' and there is stalemate over how to proceed. One difficulty is that many different kinds of public sector reform are being undertaken simultaneously - local government reform has thus been undifferentiated and its specific needs and benefits obscured. Competing bids for limited finances also undermine the prioritization and clear redefinition of local government's role and requirements. Future success will be dependent on overcoming these obstacles to progress.

B. Lessons from Trinidad and Tobago

Jarrette Narine, Minister of Local Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, reported that in the context of upcoming local government elections and the desire to attain 'developed country' status by 2020, central government

was reviewing the system of local government with the aim of enabling it to become still more 'efficient, effective, adaptive, and relevant'. Decentralization and local government have a strong record of success in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Narine attributed this to:

1. Rootedness and legislative consolidation. 'Historically, the structure and functions of Local Government Bodies have always been predicated on parliamentary legislation'.
2. A high degree of fit and adaptation between administrative and representative structures and the communities they serve. The system of local government on each of the two islands presents some differences; the population density, urban and commercial development of the locality are the criteria which determine the type of local government bodies established.
3. Genuinely autonomous decision-making in many aspects of local government and direct contact with officials on issues such as waste collection, truck-borne water, self-help projects etc. This has led to enhanced speed and efficiency of service delivery, the development of local infrastructure and other concrete benefits perceived by citizens.

However, improvements can still be made in:

- (a) Financial Resourcing. At some 10% of the 2002-3 budget, local government resourcing in Trinidad and Tobago is more generous and secure than elsewhere. It has, however, been negatively impacted by central government's deficit financing policy, which in turn is a response to the necessity for structural adjustment following downturns in oil prices.
- (b) Human Resourcing. As local government operations have become more complex and diverse, there is a need for higher levels of training for local government personnel

Central government was addressing these issues through hosting a series of regional consultations culminating in a National Consultation 'geared towards obtaining the widest possible view on the future of Local Government and its reform processes from all stakeholders including civil society'.



"Local government in Trinidad and Tobago aims to become still more efficient, adaptive and relevant."
Jarrete Narine, Minister of Local Government.

C. Experiences Beyond the Caribbean Region

Luzette King, a UPD/OAS consultant, who has also had experience as a local councilor in the United Kingdom, echoed the experience of Narine and Isidore in emphasizing that central government must “consult, consult, consult” in order to establish a local government process that genuinely represents local priorities. Central government’s lack of genuine will to share power, manifested in unrealistic budgetary restraints on local government, was, she argued, the chief impediment to decentralization processes - they were often, at some level, “aimed to fail.”

Jonas Rabinovitch of UNDP agreed that “bottom-up as well as top-down” decentralization was crucial, but cautioned that in decentralization “success” and “failure” must be viewed in relative terms and themselves defined by local priorities. Legal frameworks were also of strictly relative importance. He reported on studies undertaken by UNDP in countries such as Jordan, Honduras, South Africa, Brazil, demonstrating a so-called “acupuncture effect” in which small and focused interventions in sanitation, in the creation of a Municipal Health Council, in improving revenue generation have had proportionately larger benefits to the communities.



"Consult, consult, consult." From left to right, Lucian Isidore, (St. Lucia), Jarrette Narine (Trinidad and Tobago), Paula Mohamed (UNDP), Luzette King (UPD/OAS) and Jonas Rabinovitch (UNDP)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Edwin Jones of the University of the West Indies was invited to summarize the salient issues emerging from the forum. In doing so Jones defined 4 “C’s” as central to good local governance: “Community; Consensus; Continuity; and Complementarity.”

Truly “local” governance is rooted in identity, belonging, and connectedness- it succeeds where “natural communities” are able to form structures and relationships whose local scale and scope confer positive benefits. The forum agreed that local government, rooted in good local governance, is valuable regardless of the small size of the state or the constituency and should be actively instituted or reinstated in the Eastern Caribbean.



"The 'four Cs' of local government: community, consensus, continuity and complementarity." Edwin Jones (UWI). Left, Steven Griner (UPD/OAS) and right, Anne-Marie Blackman (UPD/OAS).

Bottlenecks currently exist in the Caribbean region that prevent implementation of local government and governance objectives. The checkered history of local government programs has created a climate of ambivalence, cynicism, resource starvation, and crisis-driven action. Decentralized structures exist, but practical decentralization has not been implemented. Moving forward involves acknowledging that decentralization presents risks associated with power-sharing, and financial and bureaucratic devolution, but that these risks are worth taking. The views expressed by participants provide some important parameters and guidelines for programmatic follow-up, horizontal cooperation and joint action on these issues in the future, and can be summarized as follows:

Institution-building was identified as the key challenge. This means clearly designing and defining roles, structures, resources and means of resource mobilization, mission and strategy. There is a need for a constitutional and legal framework to consolidate local government and local governance, to provide formal and informal regulation, and as a basis for resolving conflict. Clear manuals, guidelines, operating and management procedures, as well as simple indicators should be created. Citizens charters can play a positive role in increasing transparency and accountability of role, functions, and powers. There was the suggestion for the establishment of a resource center on issues related to decentralization and local governance.

Continuing with his summary, Jones indicated that Institution-building for decentralization requires distinguishing between decentralization as a claim, a fact, a process, and a solution. It can take many forms, including dispersal of previously centrally administered offices, the development of local representative

councils as advisory bodies or elected independent councils, the reorganization of existing political institutions, and the creation of new policy development centers and cross-party networks. But its ultimate effect must be to enhance citizen participation and to devolve decision-making to levels closer to the citizen affected by the decision i.e. to “recentralize power in favor of local communities.”

Institution-building for development means local government and governance will be called on by the people they are serving to undertake new responsibility for building sustainable socio-economic infrastructure. Creative and sustainable development will involve enterprise zones, eco-tourism, business parks, attracting investment from other spheres of government and development funds, and forging public/private partnerships and partnerships with other local government jurisdictions.



The National Democratic Institute in Guyana represented by Michael Murphy and Winston Cramer. Melene Glynn, Director of OAS General Secretariat in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in foreground.

Institution-building for inclusiveness requires reaching out to partners in governance, especially civil society organizations, building coalitions and enabling participation in local government and governance of all citizens at all levels, especially traditionally marginalized groups. Enhanced civic education, research networks, media communication on governance, and the use of new technologies to foster communication and participation are vital to fostering truly participatory governance.

The reform agenda would be multi-stage and long-term. Six central purposes in institution-building are:

1. Attacking isolated services and fragmented delivery;
2. Correcting democratic deficits;
3. Enhancing education, in particular civic education;
4. Enhancing regional collaboration;
5. Building local administrative capacity; and
6. Enhancing economic well being.

Next steps will include:

1. Implementing the findings of diagnostic studies, commissions and conferences
2. Sustained regional collaboration
3. Support of specific/discrete projects as 'pilot' experiments
4. Enhanced coordination of the community of local governance players

Philippa Lawrence, of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, recalling the principles of the "Forward Together" Consultation reminded participants of the upcoming CARICOM meeting in Suriname, while Carlos Gadsden, of the High Level Inter American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD), noted that the next ministerial level meeting of the network is scheduled to take place in Mexico City in September, 2003 - these will be among the concrete opportunities to disseminate and build on the conclusions of the present forum.

Anne-Marie Blackman, of OAS/UPD, echoed Professor Jones' emphasis on committed follow-up to the conclusions reached by the forum. She noted that the UPD would carefully analyze the issues highlighted by the forum, and would work with the various partners present to continue providing support to local governance processes in the region. She highlighted critical areas mentioned in the deliberations, such as policy formulation and implementation by central government; central/local relations and the use of new ICT technologies to enhance local governance and participation processes; the strong interest expressed in continued dialogue and exchanges of information on experiences and best practices.

Paula Mohamed (UNDP/Barbados) and Michelle Gyles-McDonnough (UNDP/Caribbean SURF) outlined UNDP's proposed follow-up support. This will involve research and best practice publications on the issue of local governance in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, including the possibility of mapping available tools and methodologies for community participation and criteria for adaptability into the region. It will also comprise identification and codification of lessons in the field of decentralization and local governance in the region; and implementation of community empowerment projects to address inter-linkages between governance, environment and poverty challenges through an integrated approach, possibly in cooperation with GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) for Barbados and the OECS.

Philip La Corbiniere considered that civil society should "take a lead" in the follow up to the forum and suggested that there was a need for a national and regional platform to address issues such as representation in local government/local governance structures, so that structures where the voices of civil society members were institutionally outnumbered were not replicated. He emphasized the positive role to be played by regional organizations including the OECS and CARICOM in garnering support for change.

At their own request, participants were provided by the organizers with a digest of the meeting's 'shared viewpoints and preliminary conclusions' after the first day of discussion. The forum concluded with a general agreement to underwriting the principles and actions expressed in the digest as well as in the overall summary provided by Professor Jones - and many felt that an appropriate next step would be the presentation of recommendations based on these documents to ministers/representatives at national and regional level. The shared views, which are reflected in the executive summary of this document, demonstrate the extent of agreement reached by the diverse sectors represented in the forum - itself an encouraging augury for future action.

ANNEX I

UMP Anchor and Partner Institutions

Note: Following is a reference and resource guide to the UNDP Urban Management Program (UMP)'s network of anchor and partner institutions, from which information, documentation and resource materials may be obtained.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, U S A
Mail: 304 East 45th street, Room FF-964, New York NY 10017, USA
Tel: 1 212 906 5780; Fax: 1 212 906 6471
Jonas Rabinovitch, Senior Urban Development Adviser,
E-mail: jonas.rabinovitch@undp.org;
www.undp.org

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Urban Management Programme, P O Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 2 623414; Fax: 254 2 623536
Dinesh Mehta, Programme Coordinator,
E-mail: dinesh.mehta@unhabitat.org
Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga, Human Settlements Officer,
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Liz Case, Information and Liaison Officer,
E-mail: liz.case@unhabitat.org
www.unchcs.org/unchcs/english/ump/ump.htm

The World Bank

Global Urban Unit, TWURD, 1818 H. Street N. W. Washington D. C.
20433, U.S.A.; Tel: 1 202 473 8866; Fax: 1 202 522 3223
John Flora, Manager, E-mail: jflora@worldbank.org;
www.worldbank.org

Urban Management Programme Regional Office for the Arab States

c/o **Environmental Quality International (EQI)**
18 El Mansour Mohamed, Zamalek 11211 Flat 4, Cairo, EGYPT
Tel: 202 738 2643/1326/1328; Fax: 202 340 5489
Ms. Randa Fouad, UMP Focal Point,
E-mail: rfouad@eqi.com.eg

Center for Environment and Development for Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)

2 Hegaz St., Cedare Building, Heliopolis
P. O. Box 1057, Heliopolis Bahary, Cairo, Egypt
Tel: 202-451 3921/22/23/24; Fax: 202-451 3918
Mr. Kamal A. SABET, Executive Director,
E-mail: cedare@ritsec1.com.eg

UMP Core Team

Arab States Region

Fédération Nationale des Villes Tunisiennes (FNVT)

76, rue de Syrie, 1002, Lafayette, Tunis, Tunisia
 Tel/Fax: 216-71 844 847/216-71 847454
 Mr. Abbès Mohsen, Président; Ms. Henda Gafsi, UMP Focal Point:
 <pgu.tunisie@planet.tn>

Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC)

P. O. Box 2110, Amman 11181, Jordan
 Tel: 962-6 4644307/5538228; Tlx: 22024; Fax: 962-6 4628938/5538226
 Mr. Jiries Habash, Senior Director of Housing Policies,
 E-mail: general@hudc.gov.jo

International Development Center (IDC)

Mathaf Area, Hotel Dieu Street, Mathaf Center Bldg.,
 2nd Floor, P. O. Box 166326, Beirut, Lebanon
 Tel/Fax: 961-1 612906/7
 e-mail: IDC-LB@cyberia.net.lb/idc@idc-lb.com
 http://www.idc.com.lb

Urban Management Programme Regional Office for Africa

S/c Bureau National d'Etudes, Techniques et de Développement
 (BNETD)
 Boulevard de la Comiche, COCODY, 04 BP 945 Abidjan 04, COTE
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 Tel: (225) 44 28 05 Ext. 1488 / 44 23 64; Fax: (225) 44 56 66 / 44 39 76
 Wagui Siby, Regional Coordinator, Regional Office for Africa
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 Website: <http://umproa.undp.org/

Urban Management Programme Sub-Regional Office for East and Southern Africa

UMP - P&DM Partnership, The University of Witwatersrand
 P O Box 601, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA
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Bureau National d'Etudes Techniques pour le Développement (BNETD)

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 Tel: 225-22 487457/224423 (Direct); Fax: 225-22-445666/443976
 Mr. Koffi Attahi, Coordinator,
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Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P & DM)

University of Witwatersrand, 2 St. David's Place, Parktown, Johannesburg
 P. O. Box 601 WITS, 2050, South Africa
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 Mr. Guy C. Z. Mhone, Professor and Assistant Director for Research, E-
 mail: mhoneg@pdm.wits.ac.za; gotza@zeus.mgmt.wits.ac.za

Municipal Development Programme (MDP)

Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
7th Floor, Hurudza House, 14-16 Nelson Mandela Avenue, Harare,
Zimbabwe
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Fax: 263-4 774387
Mr. George Matovu, Regional Director,
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Development Policy Center (DPC)

DPC Road/Oba Akinyele Street, Behind UNICEF Ibadan Zonal Office
P. O. Box 30733 (Secretariat), Agodi-Ibadan, Nigeria
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Fax: 234-2 8103280
Prof. S. I. Abumere, Head, Urban and Rural Development Unit
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Nigerian Urban Forum (NUF)

Okoi Arikpo House (5th Floor)
5, Idowu Taylor Street, P. M. B 80093
Victoria Island, Lagos
Tel: 234-1 2620237-9
Fax: 234-1 2620310
Kabir M. Yari (Hon. Secretary)

Institut Africain de Gestion Urbaine (IAGU)

Villa No. 2243 Dieuppeul 1
B.P. 7263, Dakar, Sénégal
Tel: 221-824 4424;
Fax: 221-825 0826
Mr. Oumar Cisse, Secrétaire Exécutif, E-mail:
iagu@cyg.sn/iagurrps@enda.sn

Institute for Human Settlements and Environment (IHSE)

Block XX, Plot 18, Basorun Estate
P. O. Box 26970, Agodi Post Office
Ibadan, Nigeria
Tel: 234-2 715488/8100901/2242
Fax: 234-2 8102558/1452
Dr. Tunde Agbola, Executive Director

Government Training Institute (GTI)

P. O. Box 84027
Mombasa, Kenya
Mr. Nelson Mong'oni
For: Principal
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UMP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Asian Institute of Technology (AIT); Km. 42 Paholyothin Highway
 P O Box 4, Klong Luang, Pathumthani 12120
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Urban Management Programme Regional Office for Asia/Pacific South Asia Sub-Office

All India Institute of Local Self Government, 22-23, Institutional Area, D Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi, 110070 INDIA
 Tel: 91 11 552 2473/4 or 561 1783; Fax: 91 11 550 0117
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Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

P. O. Box 2754, Klong Luang, Pathumthani 12120, Thailand
 Tel: 66-2 516 011029/013044 524 5668/5698/5608/5281
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 Prof. Mario T. Tabucanon, Provost,
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www.hsd.ait.ac.th/ump/ump.html

All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIIISG)

Sthanikraj Bhavan, C.D. Barfiwala Marg, Andheri (West)
 Mumbai - 58, India 400058
 Tel: 91-22 6205670/6716/6284431; Fax: 91-22 628 8790
 Dr. Jatin V. Modi, President
 Mr. Ranjit S. Chavan, Director-General, E-mail: aiisg@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Local Government Development Foundation (LOGODEF)

Suite 333 & 334 PICC Secretariat Building
 Roxas Boulevard 1307, Pasay City, Philippines
 Tel: 632-831 3866/3872/0789 & 551 7920 local 7638;
 Fax: 632 831 3872
 Mr. Gaudioso C. SOSMENA Jr., Executive Director, E-mail:
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Urban Experts Network

UrbNet-Vietnam, c/o National Institute for Urban and Rural Planning,
 Ministry of Construction, 37 Le Dai Hanh Str., Hanoi, Vietnam
 Tel/Fax: 84-4 821 5794; Fax: 84 4 826 4339
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SEVANATHA

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Urban Management Programme Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

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Website: <http://www.pgualc.org/>

Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo de los Gobiernos Locales (IULA-CELCADEL)

Agustin Guerrero No. 219 y P. Chiriboga, Casilla 17-01-1109, Quito, Ecuador
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Centro de Investigaciones (CIUDAD),

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Instituto de Promocion de la Economica Social (IPES)

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ANNEX II**THE HIGH-LEVEL INTER-AMERICAN NETWORK ON
DECENTRALIZATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
- RIAD -**

Note: The information below describes the high level network known as RIAD which is a cooperation instrument at the service of the member states of the OAS.

OBJECTIVES

The High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD), is a body for Inter-American cooperation which connects high level officials and experts from the ministries and government agencies responsible for decentralization, strengthening local government and civil society participation. It was established to:

1. Provide a periodic institutionalized opportunity, in the framework of the OAS, to enhance the exchange of skills, information, and experience at the highest government level.
2. Develop general and strategic guidelines that can provide a reference point for the development and application of public policies to strengthen and guarantee the continuity of decentralization, local government and citizen participation processes.
3. Provide follow-up and systematic support for the implementation of mandates of the Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Americas.
4. Promote activities with international, institutional, and/or private organizations, which may lead to financing or cooperation with networks of experts, subregional and national forums, electronic and virtual links, horizontal technical advisory services, training courses and seminars, research and publications.

BACKGROUND

The Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Americas held in **Santiago, Chile in 1998** highlighted the need to strengthen municipal and regional administrations with a view to enhancing their role in national affairs, as well as to strengthening civil society to promote its participation in decision-making on public policy.

The Summit of the Americas held in **Quebec City in 2001** reaffirmed this commitment and expressly mandated a series of actions to further these goals, recognizing that citizen participation and adequate political representation are the foundation of democracy, and that local governments are closest to the everyday lives of the citizen.

Based on these Summit commitments, the Organization of American States (OAS) with technical support from the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy of the OAS General Secretariat, convened the first Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities Responsible for Policies on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation at the Municipal Level in the Hemisphere.

The ministerial meeting convened by the OAS as called for in the Plan of Action of the Summit of Quebec City was held July 29 - 31, 2001 in La Paz, Bolivia. The meeting issued the **Declaration of la Paz on Decentralization and Strengthening Regional and Municipal Administrations and Participation of Civil Society**, which records the main conclusions of this meeting and establishes the **High Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Civil Society Participation (RIAD)** as an instrument for Inter-American cooperation.

STRUCTURE

The network is comprised of:

- a. The Inter-American meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities Responsible for Policies on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation at the Municipal Level;
- b. The activities of the high level government officials and experts;
- c. Activities implemented.

RIAD has:

- a. A Chair pro tempore, held by the most recent host country of the meeting of ministers and high level authorities ¹.
- b. A vice-chair pro tempore held by the host country of the upcoming meeting of ministers and high level authorities ².
- c. A technical secretariat whose functions are entrusted to the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy of the OAS General Secretariat.

In accordance with the Declaration of La Paz, the Network is to hold, at least every two years, an Inter-American meeting of ministers and high level authorities to consider and evaluate activities conducted and to identify new areas of endeavor that would advance the aims and objectives set forth in the Declaration of La Paz. The Second meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities is scheduled for Mexico City on September 24-26, 2003, approving "The Plan of Action of Mexico City on Decentralization and Strengthening of Regional and Municipal Administration and Citizen Participation".

To assist in promoting information and exchanges among its members, the Technical Secretariat of RIAD has established the Website www.upd.oas.org/riad with a view to incorporating a range of information of interest to the members of the Network.

